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Stretzer (Thomas)

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ARBOR VITÆ:
OR, THE
NATURAL HISTORY
OF THE
TREE of LIFE.
In PROSE and VERSE.

*In Stem most streight of lovely Size,
With Head elate this Plant doth rise ;
First bare———when it doth further shoot
A Tuft of Moss keeps warm the Root :
No Lapland Muff has such a Fur,
No Skin so soft has any Cur ;
This touch'd, alone the Heart can move,
Which Ladies more than Lap-Dogs love.*

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ARBOR VITÆ:
 OR, THE
 Natural HISTORY
 OF THE
 TREE of LIFE.

The DESCRIPTION *and* PLACE.

THE *Tree of Life* is a *succulent Plant*, consisting of one only strait Stem, on the Top of which is a *Pistillum*, or *Apex*, at sometimes *Glandiform*, and resembling a *May Cherry*, tho' at others, more like the *Nut* of the *Avellana* or *Filbeard-Tree*.

Its Fruit, contrary to most others, grow near the Root ; they are usually no more than two in Number, their Bigness somewhat exceeding that of an ordinary *Nutmeg*, both contain'd in one strong *Siliqua*,

OR

or Purse; which, together with the whole Root of the Plant, is commonly thick set with numerous *Fibrillæ*, or *Capillary Tendrils*.

The Tree is of a slow Growth, and requires Time to bring it to Perfection, rarely seeding to any purpose before the Fifteenth Year; when the Fruits coming to good Maturity, yield a viscous Juice or balmy *Succous*, which being from Time to Time discharged at the *Pistillum*, is mostly bestow'd upon the open *Calyx* of the *Frutex Vulvaria*, or *Flowering Shrub*, usually spreading under the Shade of this Tree, and whose Parts are, by a wonderful Mechanism, adapted to receive it. The ingenious Mr. *Richard Bradley* is of Opinion, the *Frutex* is hereby impregnated, and then first begins to bear; he therefore accounts this *Succous* the *Farina Fœcundans* of the Plant; and the learned *Leonard Fucksius*, in his *Historia Stirpium insigniorum*, observes the greatest Sympathy between this Tree and Shrub, “ They are, *says he*, of the same Genus, “ and do best in the same Bed; the *Vul-* “ *varia* itself being indeed no other “ than a Female *Arbor Vitæ*.

It is produc'd in most Countries, tho'

it thrives more in some than others, where it also increases to a larger Size. The Height here in *England*, rarely passes seven, or nine Inches, and that chiefly in *Kent*; whereas in *Ireland*, it comes to far greater Dimensions; is so good, that many of the Natives intirely subsist upon it, and, when transplanted, have been sometimes known to raise good Houses with single Plants of this Sort.

As the *Irish* Soil is accounted the best, others are as remarkably bad for its Cultivation; and the least and worst in the World are said to be about *Harborough* and the Forest of *Sherard*.

The Stem seems to be of the *sensitive* Tribe, tho' herein differing from the more common *Sensitives*; that whereas they are known to shrink and retire from even the gentlest Touch of a Lady's Hand, this rises on the contrary, and extends itself when it is so handled.

In Winter it is not easy to raise these Trees without a hot Bed; but in warmer Weather they stand well in the open Air.

In the latter Season they are subject to become weak and flaccid, and want Support; for which Purpose some Gardeners have thought of splintring them up
with

with *Birchen-Twigs*, which has seem'd of some Service for the present, tho' the Plants have very soon come to the same, or a more drooping State than before.

The late ingenious Mr. *Motteux* thought of restoring a fine Plant he had in this Condition, by tying it up with a *Tomex*, or Cord made of the Bark of the *Vitex*, or *Hempen Tree*: But whether he made the Ligature too strait, or that the Nature of the *Vitex* is really in itself pernicious, he quite kill'd his Plant thereby; which makes this universally condemn'd, as a dangerous Experiment.

Some *Virtuosi* have thought of improving their Trees for some Purposes, by taking off the *Nutmegs*, which is however a bad Way; they never *seed* after, and are good for little more than making Whistles of, which are imported every Year from *Italy*, and sell indeed at a good Price.

Some other curious Gentlemen have endeavour'd to inoculate their Plants on the Stock of the *Medlar*, and that with a Manure of *human Ordure*, but this has never been approv'd: And I have known some Trees brought to a *very ill End* by such Management.

The natural Soil is certainly best for their Propagation, and that is in hollow Places, that are warm and near salt Water, best known by their producing the same Sort of *Tendrils* as are observed about the Roots of the *Arbor* itself. Some Cautions however are very necessary, especially to young Botanists; and first, to be very diligent in keeping their Trees clean and neat; a pernicious Sort of Insect, not unlike a *Morpoine*, or *Cimex*, being very subject to breed amongst the *Fibrillæ*, which, if not taken Heed of and timely destroyed, proves often of very dangerous Consequence.

Another Caution, no less useful, we have from that excellent and judicious Botanist Mr. *Humphrey Bowen*, to beware of a poisonous Species of *Vulvaria*, too often mistaken for the wholesome one, and which, if suffer'd too near our Trees, will very greatly endanger their well-being. He tells us, in the 12th Volume of his large Abridgement of *la Quintyne*, that before he had acquir'd his Judgment and Experience, some of his Plants have often been Sufferers thro' this Mistake; and he has seen a tall thriving Tree, by the Contact only of this venom-

ous Shrub, become *porrose scabiose*, and covered with *fungous Excreescences*, not unlike the Fruits of the *Ficus Sylvestris*; in which Case the *Succous* also has lost both its Colour and Virtue; and the Tree itself has so much partaken of the Nature of the venomous Shurb that had hurt it, that itself has become venomous, and spread the Poison through a whole Plantation.

These Distempers of a Tree of the greatest Use and Value, have employ'd the Labours of the most eminent Botanists and Gardeners, to seek out Remedies for them: In which, however, none have succeeded like the celebrated Dr. *Misauhin*, who from his profound Knowledge in Botany, has compos'd a most elaborate Work upon *all Things that can happen*, both to the *Arbor Vitæ*, and *Vulvaria* also: There he has taught a certain Cure for all these Evils; and, what is most wonderful, has even found out a Way of making the most venomous *Vulvaria* itself wholesome, which his Widow practises daily, to the Satisfaction of all that apply to her.

These venomous *Vulvaria's* are but too common in most Gardens about *London*.

don. There are many in *St. James's Park*, and more in the celebrated Gardens of *Vaux-hall*, *Cuper's* and *Marybone*.

The NAMES and V I R T U E S.

BESIDES the common Name of *Arbor Vitæ*, a very learned Philosopher and great Divine would have it call'd, *Arbor Scientiæ boni & mali*; believing, upon very good Grounds, this is the Tree which grew in the Middle of the Garden of *Eden*, and whose Fruits were so alluring to our First Mother. Others would have it call'd the *Mandrake* of *Leah*, persuaded it is the same whose Juice made the before-barren *Rachel* a joyful Mother of Children.

The learned *Madame D'Acier*, in her Notes upon *Homer*, contends it should be call'd *Nepenthes*. She gives many Reasons why it is certainly that very Plant, whose Fruits the *Egyptian* Queen recommended to *Helen*, as a certain Cure for Pain and Grief of all Sorts, and which she ever after kept by her as her

most precious Jewel, and made use of as a *Panacæa* upon all Occasions.

The great Dr. *Bently* calls it, more than once, *Machæra Herculis*, having proved, out of the Fragments of a *Greek* Poet, that of this Tree was made that Club with which the Hero is said to overcome the fifty wild Daughters of *Thespius*, but which Queen *Omphala* afterwards reduced to a Distaff. Others have thought the celebrated *Hesperian* Trees were of this Sort ; and the very Name of *Poma Veneris*, frequently given by Authors to the Fruits of this Tree, is a sufficient Proof these were really the *Apples* for which three Goddesses contended in so warm a Manner, and to which the Queen of Beauty had undoubtedly the strongest Title.

The Virtues are so many a large Volume might be wrote of them. The Juice, taken inwardly, cures the Green-sickness, and other Infirmities of the like Sort, and is a true Specific in most Disorders of the Fair Sex. It indeed often causes Tumours in the Umbilical Region ; but even those, being really of no ill Consequence, disperse themselves in a few Months.

It cheers the Heart, and exhilarates the Mind, quiets Jars, Feuds and Discontents, making the most churlish Tempers surprizingly kind and loving. Nor have private Persons only been the better for this reconciling Virtue, but whole Estates and Kingdoms ; nay, the greatest Empires in the World have often received the Benefit of it ; the most destructive Wars have been ended, and the most friendly Treaties been produced, by a right Application of this Universal Medicine among the Chiefs of the contending Parties.

If any Person is desirous to see this excellent and wonderful Plant in good Perfection, he may meet with it at the aforementioned Mr. *Bowen's* Garden at *Lambeth*, who calls it, *The Silver Spoon Tree* ; and is at all times ready to oblige his Friend with the Sight of it.

ARBOR VITÆ:
OR, THE
Natural HISTORY
OF THE
Tree of Life; Verfify'd.

The DESCRIPTION *and* PLACE.

THE Tree of which I fain would
sing,
If the kind Muse her Aid would bring,
Is *Arbor Vitæ* ; but in brief,
By vulgar Men call'd—*Tree of Life*.

First for Description then, 'tis such
As needs must captivate you much.
In Stem most streight of lovely Size,
With Head elate this Plant doth rise ;

First bare——when it doth further shoot,
A Tuft of Moss keeps warm the Root :
 No *Lapland* Muff has such a Fur,
 No Skin so soft has any Cur ;
 This touch'd, alone the Heart can move,
 Which Ladies more than Lap-Dogs love ;
 From this erect springs up the Stalk,
 No Power can stop, or ought can baulk ;
 On Top an *Apex* crowns the Tree,
 As all Mankind may plainly see ;
 So shines a Filbeard, when the Shell,
 Half gone, displays the *ruby Peel* ;
 Or like a Cherry bright and gay,
 Just red'ning in the Month of *May*.

As other Trees bear Fruit at Top,
 And they who rob 'em must *climb up* ;
 This still more rare doth upward shoot,
 But at the Bottom bears its Fruit,
 And they who reap its Virtues strong,
 Need but to lay 'em *all along*,
Ope wide their Mouths, and they'll
 receive
 The *Fruit of Life*, and eat, and live :

Not

Not the fair Tree that *India* bears,
 All over Spice both Head and Ears,
 Can boast more Gifts than the great
 Pow'rs

Have granted to this Tree of ours;
 That in good Ale its Power boasts,
 And ours has *Nutmegs* fit for *Toasts*,
 And Bags by *Nature* planted grow,
 To keep 'em from all Winds that blow.

The Rise is slow, and by Degrees,
 Both Fruits and Tree itself increase
 So slow, that ten Years scarce produce
Six Inches good and fit for Use;
 But fifteen ripen well the Fruit,
 And add a *viscous Balm* into't;
 Then rubb'd, drops Tears as if 'twas
 griev'd,
 Which by a neighbouring Shrub's re-
 ceiv'd;
 As Men set Tubs to catch the Rain,
 So does this Shrub *its Juice* retain,
 Which 'cause it wears a colour'd Robe,
 Is justly call'd the *Flow'ring Shrub*.

In every Nation springs this Tree,
 In some confin'd, in others more free;
 In *England* 'tis of moderate Size,
 And oft does *nine full Inches* rise;
 But *Ireland*, tho' in Soil most poor,
 Exceeds all Lands in this same Store;
 And sent it o'er hither, it's such
 As does exceed our own by much,
 And gets the Owner many a *Farthing*,
 for *Ladies* love it in their *Garden*.

That it's a *Tree* right *sensitive*,
 Denies no honest Man alive;
 Tho' as one *shrink*s and will not stand,
 This *rises* at a *Lady's* Hand;
 And grows more strong the more 'tis
 strok'd,
 And others *Fall* when they are *pok'd*.

When nipping Cold bites off our Nose,
 And hoary Frosts the Morn disclose,
 In *Hot-Beds* only then 'twill live,
 And only when well warm'd will thrive;

But

But when warm Summer does appear,
 'Twill *stand* all *Brunts* in open *Air*,
 Tho' oft they're overcome with Heat,
 And sink with Nurture too replete ;
 Then *Birchen Twigs*, if right apply'd,
 To Back, Fore-part, or either Side—
 Support a while, *and keep it up*,
 Tho' soon again the Plant will droop.

Motteux had one very untowr'd
 And thought to mend it with a Cord,
 But *kill'd the Tree*, yet gain'd his *End*,
 Which makes th' Experiment condemn'd.
 Others have thought to mend the Root,
 By taking from the Tree its Fruit ;
 But in the *Nutmegs* lies the Breed,
 And when they're gone we lose the *Seed* ;
 Tho' *Virtuosi* still have don'r,
 And always found it yield Account ;
 For *Hey-- gg---r* then buys the *Wood*,
 And of it makes us Whistles good,
 Which yearly from *Italia* sent,
 Here answers his and our Intent.

Others too curious will *inoc-*
Ulate their Plants on *Medlars* Stock,

(i. e.

(i. e. as Tongues in Vulgar pass,
 They graft it on an *Open-Arse*;)
 But Gardeners, Virtuosi all,
 Say this is most *unnatural*.

That Soil is certainly the best,
 When first it sprang, and first increas'd,
 In Vallies hollow, soft and warm,
 With Hills to ward off every Storm.
 Where Water salt runs trickling down,
 And *Tendrils* lie o'er all the Ground,
 Such as the Tree itself shoots forth,
 And better if't be tow'rd's the *North*;
 When such a Piece of Ground you see,
 If in the Midst a Pit there be,
 There plant it deep unto the *Root*,
 And never fear,—you'll soon have *Fruit*.

Tho' let young Botanists beware
 Of Insects that oft harbour there,
 Which 'mongst the tender *Fibres* breed,
 And, if not kill'd, eat up the *Seed*:
 Good *Humphrey Bowen* gives another,
 (As each Man should assist his Brother)

That

That is, to take especial Care,
 Not to set *Vulvaria* near ;
 Of them two Sorts are frequent found,
 One helps, and t'other spoils the Ground ;
 And many a Plant thriving and tall,
 Destroy'd by them has got a Fall.

But *Misan*'s taking this just napping,
 And *against all Things that can happen*
 Both to the Shrub and Tree, has told
 some

How to make the deadliest *Wholesome* ;
 These venomous *Vulvaria*'s grow
 At *Vaux-Hall* and *St. James's* too ;
 Nay, and about the Tree so leap,
 That very few good Plants can 'scape.

The NAMES and VIRTUES.

OLD Mother *D'Acier*, in her Notes
 On *Homer* some hard *Greek* Word
 quotes,

Calls it *Nep, nep*,—I know not what,
 And says, it is the very Plant that

The

The tawny Queen to *Helen* sent,
To cure her Griefs at all Event.

Great *Milton's Murd'rer* says, it is
The fam'd *Machæra Herculis*,
And proves from some old *Grecian* Poet,
So plain that all Men sure must know it,
That of this *Tree* the Club was made,
With which he overcome ('tis said)
Thespius' Daughters, all grown wild,
And *fifty Mad-Women* made mild;
Which very Club---(it makes one laugh)
Omphale turn'd into a Distaff.
Nay, the *Hesperian Tree* was this,
As shew the *Poma Veneris*;
These Apples doubtless were the Fruit
That 'twixt the Queens rais'd such Dis-
pute,

To make them all *start naked* stand,
While *Paris* held it in his Hand,
And *chuck'd* into *Venus's* Mouth,
'Cause she with Beauty fir'd the Youth.

The Virtues are of such great Note,
That twenty Volumes might be wrote ;

The

The Juice alone Green-Sickness cures,
 And purges thro' all corporal Pores ;
 If any Maid be sick, or faint,
 Of Love, or Father's close Constraint,
 One Spoonful of this cordial Balm
 Soon stops each Grief, and every
 Qualm ;

'Tis true, they sometimes Tumours
 cause,
 And in the Belly make strange Flaws,
 But a few Moons will make 'em sound,
 And safely fetch the Swelling down.

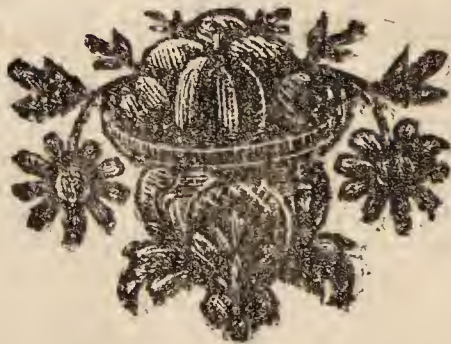
Not Saffron cheers the Heart like this,
 Nor can Champain give such a Bliss :
 When Wife and Husband do fall out,
 And both remain in sullen Pout,
 This brings them to themselves again,
 And fast unites the broken Chain,
 Makes Feuds and Discords straightway
 cease,
 And gives, at least, a *Night of Peace*.

This Rarity may now be seen
 In *Lambeth*, at a Garden Green.

Bowen his Name, who in high Tone,
Calls it the *Tree of Silver Spoon*.

Which all the Maids of curious Eyes
May there behold of *largest Size*.

F I N I S.



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